

A

LETTER TO THE MANAGERS

OF

THE ROYAL PUBLIC DISPENSARY,  
&c. &c.

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GENTLEMEN,

IN consequence of a statement which appeared in the Scotsman of July 7th, purporting to be an account of the proceedings of a meeting held in Oman's Hotel on the preceding Monday, to consider of instituting a New Dispensary for Diseases of the Skin; I feel myself called upon to give the public a fair account of the part I took, and meant to take, at that meeting. In doing this, I beg to be understood as not intending to impute the least blame to the Editor of the Scotsman for having misunderstood the purpose of my appearance at that meeting, because I was so frequently interrupted, and the meeting so decidedly averse to hearing any thing hostile to Dr Duffin, that I am only surprised that the Editor of the Scotsman did not misunderstand my meaning more than he has done; for although the Lord Provost, who was in the chair, indulged me with a much longer hearing than was palatable to the meeting, it was evident that his mind was under the impression of my object being to complain that any body should set up a similar practice to mine; but if he does me the honour to read this Letter, I am sure he will see that I am contending for a very different proposition; and, as to the Editor of the Scotsman, I feel myself obliged by the attestation he has given in the fol-

lowing passage of his report:—"In mentioning the design of extending the use of Medicated Baths in the proposed Establishment, Dr Duffin took occasion to compliment Mr Scott of Broughton Street on his having introduced the use of Vapour Baths into this city. Mr Scott, who was not present when this was done, complained afterwards of his exertions, and his engagements with one of the Dispensaries, having been overlooked or misrepresented by Dr Duffin. The latter gentleman vindicated himself, declaring that he had no wish to deprive Mr Scott of honours due to him, and acknowledging frankly that he had derived information from Mr Scott's practice; but the meeting obviously considered these to be matters which did not fall to be discussed at a public meeting, and they accordingly proceeded to name directors and office-bearers. We have had occasion to know various instances of Mr Scott's liberality to the poor; and few, we think, will deny, that he has conferred a benefit on medicine, and upon this city, by his reviving, or rather *introducing* into this country, a *new* as well as extended use of the *Medicated Vapour Bath*."

Now, I disclaim having appeared at that Meeting for any object so perfectly contemptible as that alluded to by the Seotsman; nor did the circumstance of my not being present, when Dr Duffin mentioned my name, make the least difference. Matters had gone too far to be cured by compliments. I stated that Dr Duffin was endeavouring to deprive me of the benefit of a contract that I was in possession of; that he had traduced me and my Establishment in various directions; and that he did so while he was not only in my confidence, but in my employment, and deriving pecuniary advantages from my Establishment, without any risk or expense on his part. I am perhaps rather prolix in my statements, oral and written, but I very early learned that, "*dum brevis esse laboro, obscurus fio*." What I said and intended to say was, That as this was a

meeting to consider of a project of Dr Duffin's for instituting a New Dispensary for Diseases of the Skin, (in which he was of course to be a medical officer,) I thought the public had a right to be informed of what had been already done in this town upon the subject, and of the manner in which he had treated me, in order that they might judge how far a new Institution of this kind was necessary: That it was five years ago since I first introduced a most important practice for the cure of Diseases of the Skin into this town; that after having cured great numbers of poor people *gratis*, a case came before the Doctors of your Dispensary, that was thought to be so incurable as not to be worth sending to me; upon which Dr Aitken brought the man to Drummond Street, where my Establishment then was, and asked me if I would take another patient *gratis*, and try what I could do. I did so, and in a week's time the man was cured. Dr Aitken took him back at the next meeting, and the Doctors of the Dispensary were so perfectly satisfied with the cure, that the Managers immediately entered into a resolution to give printed authorities to all the *Surgeons* to send patients to my Establishment; and accordingly I entered into an agreement with them, to supply their poor patients at 1s. 6d. a bath. In consequence of this agreement, I took a place called the Lyceum, in Nicolson Street, and fitted up the necessary apparatus for the reception of their patients; and intended to fit up more, if the numbers sent warranted me in so doing. This was not the case; and I soon learnt, that after this resolution had been come to by the Managers of furnishing the *Surgeons* with these printed authorities, to send patients to my Establishment, the Apothecary got it altered, and the authority limited to the *Physicians* only, upon the ground that the funds of the Dispensary could not afford the expense that he contemplated would be incurred if the *Surgeons*

had the power that was intended for them, and which, I understood, they were to have when I made the agreement. The effect of this second regulation was, that very few patients were sent from the Dispensary; and I did not receive enough to pay the rent of the premises, besides taxes, coals, attendance, &c. I informed Dr Duncan senior of this, and the loss that I had sustained; but he answered, that he had no power to relieve me, and that I must take my chance. I told him, in that case, I should give up the Lyceum, and that their patients may be sent to a place I had in the New Town for persons who could not afford more than 1s. 6d. for a bath; and upon that footing my engagement with your Dispensary has subsisted ever since.

As to Dr Duffin, my connection with him was this:—When he first began business in this town, about two years ago, his uncle asked me to do any thing for him in my power; and soon afterwards I gave Dr Duffin a pecuniary interest in my Establishment, without any advance or risk whatever on his part; and this he had been receiving up to the publication of my “Vindication,” and for it he has repeatedly professed his obligations to me.

I had a very great regard for him, and I did every thing in my power to serve him. I directed his attention particularly to the Diseases of the Skin, shewed him the bad cases that occurred, wherever I could take the liberty of doing so, and where the patients were not sent by any other medical man. At first he was extremely sceptical of the power of the remedies employed. I remember one case in particular, which came in while he was in the house. As the patient was my own, and did not come recommended by any medical man, I asked his permission to shew him to a young medical friend of mine that was then in the house. The patient consented, and I called Dr Duffin into the room, and he saw the patient



just as he was going into the Bath for the first time. It was as bad a case of the scaly eruption (improperly called Leprosy) as I had seen. The patient was about twenty-five, and he had had the disease for twenty years. Dr Duffin's remark to me, as soon as we were alone, was, that no bath, nor any thing else, could cure that man; that it was his nature to have his skin in that state, for he might almost be said to be born so. The patient was cured; and Dr Duffin was too great a lover of his profession not to be struck with the beauty and efficacy of the practice. He became after this very keen in his inquiries upon Diseases of the Skin, which I did every thing in my power to encourage: But having formed the design of opposing me, and depriving me of the benefit of my contract with the Old Town Dispensary, it required great adroitness not only to keep in with me while his scheme was in progress, but to get every assistance in my power to give him; or, as a friend of mine, who first roused my suspicion upon the subject, figuratively expressed it, to "get a razor out of my hands to cut my throat." Dr Duffin informed me some months ago, that as it was quite impossible for a young man, however well acquainted with his profession, to get into practice without doing something to attract public notice, he had determined to set up a Dispensary for the Poor for Diseases of the Skin. I wished him every success in his project, and had no doubt that he would do himself great credit by it, and offered him the use of my baths *gratis*, for such of his patients as, after what he had seen of my practice, he thought might be benefited by them. He said that Dr Duncan junior was in partnership with him in the business, and that he had proposed my baths to Dr Duncan, but that Dr Duncan had insisted that they should have a Vapour Bath of their own, to be under their own eye. I thought nothing of this, and some time afterwards he informed me how successful he had been, and that he was going to write a book

upon the subject, and desired me to lend him mine. I told him it was out of print, and that I had not a copy myself left; he desired me to borrow it of any body that I knew had it, for that he could not get on without it. I did so, and sent it him. Afterwards he applied to me for a publication which Mr Green had lately done me the honour to send me from London. I had lent it to Mr R. Scott, and to him Dr Duffin applied and got it. He also applied to me for leave to copy some of my drawings of the diseases that have been cured here, and got them, particularly an arm exquisitely done by Mr Carswell, and a hand and face extremely well done by Mr Fraser.

Soon after all these materials had been furnished, I heard that a Memorial of Dr Duffin's was in very active circulation all over the town. It was full a fortnight after I heard this, before one was delivered at my house; and upon reading it, I observed, with no little surprise, how studiously all notice of what I had done and written upon this subject had been avoided, particularly after he had alluded to "Vapour, Medicated, and hot Water Baths," and declared them to be "essential in the cure of most cutaneous diseases."

My surprise at this Memorial was hardly over, when my suspicion was awakened (and *credit* has been well defined to be nothing more than "suspicion asleep,") by my friend with his strong figure of the razor, and with a serious assurance that it was high time to look about me.

Accordingly I did so, and soon found that a tenth part of what Dr Duffin had been saying of me and my Establishment, for the last three months, subjected him to a very heavy action of damages at my hands; and as such action may yet be brought, I shall mention only a few of the facts that have come to my knowledge. I found that where my name was mentioned he pretended to know little or nothing of me; and when he was informed of what I had done in diseases of the skin, and some surprise was ex-

pressed that any medical man in this town should be unacquainted with my practice, Dr Duffin then asserted that I had no *medicated* Vapour Baths, whereas that *his* were *medicated*, and mine only simple Vapour Baths. I found that to some he had declared, that, for his part, he would never send another patient to my Establishment; to others he asserted that I could not give the Sulphur Fumigation; to others, that I could not give the Nitro-Muriatic Acid Vapour; to others, that I did not medicate the Baths properly. Dr Duffin admitted at the meeting, that he had said that my Baths were not properly *medicated*. Now if any Surgeon were to make it his business to go about declaring in all companies, that Dr Duffin's operations in Surgery, such as bleeding for instance, &c. were improperly performed, who could doubt what were the motives of such conduct? Dr Duffin has moreover taken upon him to assert, that I had received from the medical men in subscriptions upwards of £300; that nobody knew what had become of the money, and that the medical men were determined to send no more patients to me. To some of his assertions I have given an answer in the "Vindication" I felt called upon to publish the moment I found what he was about; but at that time I had not heard half what I have heard since, and am daily hearing; for I find the most indefatigable pains have been taken to ruin my Establishment. As to the Sulphur Fumigation, I perfectly well recollect Dr Duffin's seeing me use it to a patient at the Lyceum, and I suppose I must have given some thousands of that bath since I first began.

The Nitro-muriatic Acid, Dr Abercrombie knows I used three years ago; and at page 65 of my second publication, called the Appendix, I speak of it by name.

With respect to the subscriptions, I shall be most particular; and then the public will judge with what mind such an insinuation could have been made by any person, and particularly by one who was known at that time to be greatly in my confidence.

When I first proposed the introduction of this practice, about five years ago, the following subscriptions were made to it, and were published in the first paper I wrote upon the subject, and again in the Appendix.

“ Mr Bryce approves of the above plan, and will subscribe One Guinea towards its accomplishment.

(Signed) “ JAMES BRYCE.”

“ I highly approve of the above Proposal, from the obvious effects of the Vapour Bath, which I once saw in what had been considered as not only a singular, but a hopeless case. I subscribe One Guinea.

(Signed) “ JOHN BARCLAY.”

Dr Hamilton, Sen. One Guinea.

Dr Abercrombie, Do.

Dr Alison, Do.

Mr Joseph Bell, Do.

Mr George White, Do.

“ I highly approve the within Proposal, having reaped much benefit from it in my own person, and will subscribe One Guinea for its accomplishment.

(Signed) “ WILLIAM FARQUHARSON.”

“ A good Vapour-Bath may be useful ; and I subscribe One Guinea to promote the Plan stated in the preceding pages.

(Signed) “ JAMES GREGORY.”

“ I approve very much of the object stated above, and will subscribe One Guinea.

(Signed) “ WILLIAM BEILBY.”

Mr Laurie, One Guinea.

Mr Law, Do.

Mr Russell, Do.

Dr Duncan, Senior, Do.

Mr Newbigging, Do.

Dr Hamilton, Junior, Do.

Mr George Bell, Do.

“ I highly approve of Baths of the above description being in Edinburgh, and will subscribe one Guinea for that purpose.

(Signed) “ A. MACKENZIE GRIEVES.”



Dr Hunter,	One Guinea.
Mr Barker,	Do.
Mr Cumming,	Do.
Dr Aitken,	Do.
Mr Gillespie,	Do.
Dr John Thomson, (Nicolson Street)	Do.
Mr Caird,	Do.
Mr Wishart,	Do.

“ I subscribe with much pleasure One Guinea to further the within useful intention.

(Signed) “ JOHN THATCHER.”

“ I much approve of the erection of this Bath, as capable of affording great relief in many diseases.

(Signed) “ W. STEEL, M. D.”

“ I think it a disgrace to the City not to have these Baths established on a scale corresponding to the medical character of the place. For the present, I subscribe One Guinea, and am ready to subscribe much more.

(Signed) “ JAMES SANDERS.”

Dr Berry,	One Guinea.
Dr George Wood,	Do.
Mr William Wood,	Do.
Mr A. Page,	Do.
Mr J. Keith,	Do.
Dr Borthwick,	Do.
Mr Robert Allan,	Do.
Dr James Buchan,	Do.
Mr Brown,	Do.
Dr Hay,	Do.
Mr John Walker,	Do.
Mr Brunton,	Do.
Mr Liston,	Do.
The Lord Dean of Guild,	Do.
Earl of Wemyss,	Do.
Earl of Moray,	Do.
Mr George Miller,	Do.
Sir John Hay, Bart.	Do.
Sir John Sinclair, Bart.	Do.
Mr Corse Scott,	Do.”

The terms upon which the above subscription was proposed, were, that each subscriber should have the power of ordering a certain number of Baths for his patients, and most of the subscribers have long ago exhausted their tickets. Those that have not, may send patients to the Baths whenever they please. Thus, every subscriber has had, or may have, value for his subscription. None of them have subscribed a second time, nor have they been asked to do so.

Some time after the Establishment had been removed to this house, and extended as above mentioned, I published the following

### “ PROPOSAL.”

“ The Founder of the Institution for the application of Vapour, Electricity, and Cupping, and for a complete Bathing Establishment, (including Harrowgate, Bath, Buxton, and Barege Baths, according to the analysis of each, and all other Medicinal Baths ; Sea-Water, Hot and Cold Baths, Shower-Baths, Dry-Pumping, Portable Vapour Baths, Vapour-Douches, and Shampooing,) submits, with some confidence, the following statement to the Public.

“ Upwards of four hundred Vapour and Fumigating Baths have been administered to the Poor, in Diseases of the Skin, between October 1821 and October 1822 ; and in every case a cure has been made, although the diseases were very obstinate, and most of them had resisted the usual remedies. Several of these cures have been witnessed by different medical men ; notwithstanding which, the Founder of the Institution has sustained considerable loss, all that has been received at the Establishment for the Poor in the Old Town not being adequate to pay even the rent of the place, independently of taxes, coals, attendance, &c. &c. The value and importance of this Institu-

tion have been publicly acknowledged by Dr Home, Dr Duncan jun. and Dr Alison, from their respective Chairs. A Report of the Cures that have been made, and of the benefit obtained, in Gout, Rheumatism, Stiff-joints, Palsy, Asthma, Colds, Bilious and Nervous Complaints, Scalled Head, Ringworm, King's-Evil, and various Diseases of the Skin, is published by Waugh & Innes, with the Testimonials of the late Dr Gregory, and most of the Medical Men of this place.

“As the Premises in Broughton Street are about to be immediately sold, much expense and trouble will be incurred in removing the Apparatus. To this inconvenience the Institution must be continually liable, and may thereby be rendered impossible to be continued; it is therefore proposed to purchase Premises for the purpose, provided the Public will give some assistance in accomplishing this object, upon the following terms, which have been considered sufficiently liberal. The Premises purchased to be conveyed to two or more Gentlemen of undoubted respectability, upon trust, to pay Subscribers of fifty pounds and upwards three per cent. and to give them or their assignees the use of the Baths gratis. Subscribers of twenty-five pounds to have three per cent. and the use of the Baths at half-price. Those who may think that such an Institution ought not to be allowed to sink in such a place as this, so celebrated for its medical reputation, but be continued upon a scale not inferior to that of any other city in Europe, both for the rich and the poor, and who may not be disposed to take shares as above proposed, may agree to subscribe annually, or otherwise as they may please to express, ten guineas or under: Such subscriptions to be paid upon receiving an authority to give seven orders for themselves or Families, or fourteen orders for the Poor for every guinea so subscribed.”

To this Proposal about £200 was *agreed* to be subscribed; but as this was not sufficient to purchase a house,

the subscribers have never been called upon for their money,—and never can till there be enough to purchase a house, and give them heritable security thereon for their interest in the manner above proposed. A few who subscribed a guinea a-piece, have either exhausted their orders, or they have the power of doing so whenever they please.

This is the whole that has ever been done about subscriptions from first to last; and it is difficult to conceive from what motive Dr Duffin could bring himself, while he was in close friendship with me, to propagate such an insinuation; perhaps, indeed, he found that he had no ground for calling upon the public to enable him to keep up a Bathing Establishment, nor upon the Managers of the Royal Public Dispensary to break their contract with me, unless he could make them believe that I had acted dishonestly in not applying the money that had been subscribed to its proper use.

He had repeatedly heard from me while he was in my confidence, that the whole gross receipts of this Establishment had never paid the expense of the Apparatus, the rent and taxes of this house, amounting to about £100 a year, and £25 a-year for the place for the poor. So that, after having devoted five years of unremitting attention to the Establishment of this practice, it is rather too much to sit by quietly and see such an attempt made to run it down in every possible way, by one who must have known better.

Subsequently to the above Proposal, I published another paper upon the Vapour Practice, from which I make the following extracts:—

“ This remedy (the Vapour Bath) was proposed for glandular diseases in the report published by me of the cases that had occurred at this Establishment; and Mr Russell, who has written so ably on these diseases, is witness to the success of the practice.



“Since I published this report, I have had the pleasure of a visit from one of the ablest physicians of the present day (Dr Kentish of Bristol,) who did me the favour, upon that occasion, of presenting me with his “Essay on Warm and Vapour Baths,” a work I had never seen before, and from which I learned that Dr Kentish, who is undoubtedly to be considered as the first medical man that revived this practice in England in a scientific manner, had strongly recommended this remedy in scrofula from his own experience.

“I find it now admitted by all the medical men I have conversed with on the subject, that in most diseases of the skin no remedy is to be compared with the Vapour Bath ; but I believe some think me too sanguine in the opinion I entertain of its power in many other diseases.—It was upon the authority of the most eminent physicians, from Hippocrates downwards, that I learned so to apply it, and the cases I have published occurred under my own eye. They are known to several medical men, and the patients themselves have given me leave to mention their names. To these I have to add some valuable cases in diabetes, a disease which Dr Gregory used to say he never saw cured but once, and that was by the Vapour Bath ; in acute rheumatism, after the inflammatory symptoms have been reduced ; in inflammation of the mucous membrane of the intestines, in asthma, and in gout. If medical men would but consider that the lungs, the kidneys, and the skin, are all engaged in the same functions, they would understand how the Vapour Bath may be a remedy for so many different diseases. Dr Kentish was particularly pleased to see, from the cases I had published of the effect of the Vapour Bath under my own eye in different internal as well as external diseases, so strong a confirmation of the following doctrine, which he had published many years ago ; ‘ As all the secreting membranes sympathize with the surface, it will be necessary to preserve it in a healthy state, with a view of

relieving the morbid secretions of those membranes, whether they show themselves as gout, rheumatism, leprosy, or indurated affections of the legs, termed scorbutic. Should the distress have gone to the extent of destroying the structure, remedy will be doubtful: yet I have frequently seen the breast so oppressed, as to have long secreted mucus, tinged with blood, and carrying a purulent appearance, relieved, and ultimately cured, by paying proper attention to the skin, and making it perform its duty; nor is the relief confined to the breast alone: determinations to the bowels are also among the complaints in which I have found the Vapour Bath an auxiliary of the greatest use. The tendency the Bath has to put into action a series of torpid parts, is nearly as great as that of mercury. For what part of the body is there that does not sympathize with the state of the skin? Is there an inflammation of any extent on any part of the body, with which the skin does not instantaneously consent? Of the extensive use of the Bath, as an auxiliary, in causing a counter-irritation, and of the ability of the skin to bear it, I am well assured from much experience.' Dr Kentish has published successful cases in 'chronic catarrh, chronic diarrhoea, asthma, water in the chest, and dropsical swelling of the legs, lumbago, leprosy, scirrhus tumours of the breast, enlarged mesenteric glands; in serofula, inflammation of the lungs, and scrofulous consumption;' and the following opinion was published many years ago by Mr Basil Cochrane: 'There are few diseases in which, under the superintending care of the judicious medical man, they (Vapour Baths) may not, at one stage or another, be useful; and in the prevention of disease, as well as during the period of convalescence, they will also produce effects highly beneficial.' Signed by Drs Baillie, Pearson, Heberden, Willan, Warren, Garthshore, Sir Gilbert Blanc, Mr Cline, Sir James Earle, Sir Astley Cooper, Mr Charles Bell, and many more of the most eminent

medical men in London. I have also published the strongest testimonials of the medical men of this place ; and one of the most accomplished of them all, (*absit invidia*) my friend Mr Bryee, has lately had the most convincing proof of the power of this remedy in his own ease. It is well known to the profession, as well as to his numerous friends, how extremely ill he was last year, and how unwell he has been again of late. Finding none of the remedies, which either his own great skill and experience, or that of Dr Abererombie could suggest, relieve his symptoms, or even procure him sleep, he has at last yielded to my repeated persuasions and earnest solicitations to try the Vapour Bath ; and the very first Bath acted upon him like a charm, in procuring for him a good night's rest, to which he was a stranger, and in restoring the functions of the skin. The second Bath had a still more powerful effect, in not only giving him sound sleep, but in keeping up a considerable degree of perspiration all night, and enabled him the next day to go out in his carriage for some hours, and resume his practice. If the Vapour Bath shall be the happy means of restoring this amiable and excellent man to his former health, it will be the most delightful recompence to me for all the time, trouble, and risk I have been at in endeavouring to establish this practice in Edinburgh ; and it may be no small satisfaction to himself, when he recollects that he was the first to whom I mentioned my project of introducing it here, and the first who gave it the sanction of his name, which stands so high in the medical world.

“ In order to promote to the utmost of my power the benefit which poor persons may derive from the humane and charitable disposition of those able to afford them their assistance, I hereby invite every gentleman and man of science, to visit my Establishment as often as may be convenient, to see the eases among the poor, and watch the progress of this practice.

“ On Wednesdays, from nine to twelve o’clock, I shall make a point of being in the way to see poor patients, and also to receive such gentlemen as may do me the honour to accept this invitation.

“ I have received many very grateful and gratifying letters from those who have been benefited at this Establishment; but I have received one from so respectable a quarter, and a perfect stranger to me, since I began this communication, that I feel proud in laying it before the public.

“ *Manse of Bendochy, July 29, 1823.*

“ MY DEAR SIR,—We were thrown into great anxiety some weeks ago, by hearing that my son James had been attacked by a grievous malady, which had come to an alarming height, and affected his whole frame and spirits very much. We heard at the same time that that great and good man Dr Abererombie had advised a trial of the Vapour Bath, and recommended him to you; and that for several weeks, your attentions to him had been such as to mark your character, no less for benevolence, than as a gentleman. Of this be assured, that his letters speak of your extraordinary unremitting and soothing attentions to him during the progress of his disease, as to satisfy me that they have made a very lively and deep impression on his sensible heart. Such an impression as can never be effaced, and may eventually have a happy influence on his own conduct. And now that, by a perseverance in the means prescribed, you have been instrumental, under an Almighty Providence, in making the virulence of his malady to abate, and that there is a prospect of his being soon freed from it altogether, I have to request you to accept my most sincere and heartfelt acknowledgments, as those of Mrs B. and every individual of this family, for your most friendly and christian attentions to our boy, whom we hope to see soon in good health and spirits, and able to resume his studies when the classes open; and it is our



earnest wish that the salutary influence of the Vapour Baths may become as well known and encouraged as they deserve; and that you may have the exquisite delight of seeing many of your patients restored in health to their friends and families—and I shall only add, that were it ever in my power to be of any service to you or yours, I should deem myself happy. Should business or pleasure ever lead you to this quarter, I need not say that I should have a peculiar delight in having you under my roof. I am, my dear Sir, your very respectful much obliged humble servant,

THOMAS BARTY."

*To William Scott, Esq.*

Upon the appearance of my "Vindication" on the Saturday previous to Dr Duffin's Meeting, he came to me in extreme agitation, requesting me to suspend the publication till Monday: I told him that I had come to the knowledge of the manner in which he had been speaking of me and my Establishment; that I also heard he had professed his intention of setting up an Establishment similar to mine; that at the one he had already got, which he pretended to be solely for the poor, he had been taking money from all that could pay him; and that he intended to apply to the Royal Public Dispensary for their patients: that, under these circumstances, all his conduct of late was perfectly explicable. He admitted the taking of money from those who could afford to pay for his baths, and of the intention of applying for the patients of the Royal Public Dispensary; also, that he might have said that he intended to set up an Establishment similar to mine, but that he had no funds at present to do it with. I answered him, that, under the circumstances of our connexion, and while he was actually receiving pecuniary advantage from my Establishment, he had no right to deprive me of the benefit of a contract that he knew I was in possession of; much less had

he any right to erect his upon the ruin of the reputation of mine; that I was determined, by some means or other, to make the public understand the matter; and then the question would be seen to be, not whether I was the only person entitled to set up the practice which I had introduced, which I never pretended to be the case; but whether the public would enable *him*, by their subscriptions, under all the circumstances of the case, to set up an opposition Establishment to mine; and whether the Managers of the Royal Public Dispensary would, at his suggestion and application, suffer their contract with me to be broken or interfered with? He promised, that if I would suspend the publication of my "Vindication," he would go home and write a paper to read at the Meeting, which he would shew me the next day by twelve o'clock, in which he would give me complete satisfaction upon every point. His insinuations about the subscriptions I had not then heard of, and I allowed him the time he desired to give me satisfaction. At twelve o'clock the next day Dr Duffin called upon me, and said he had taken advice, (I think he said of a lawyer); and that he found he had committed himself too much the day before; that he had not written the paper he promised; and that the Meeting had nothing to do with our dispute. Immediately after the meeting I received the following letter:—

" *To MR SCOTT, Broughton Street.*

" SIR,—In consequence of what happened to-day at Oman's Hotel; of course all intercourse between us, and any contract or agreement which formerly existed, must now be at an end. I remain, with respect, your obedient servant,

E. W. DUFFIN."

The public are now in possession of this young gentleman's behaviour, and may form their own opinion concerning it; but, with respect to this New Dispensary, however

right it may be to benefit the poor as much as possible, it is surely equally right to do it in the most judicious and economical manner, considering how many subscriptions are now on foot for different purposes; and I think that this new Institution ought to have been engrafted upon the Royal Public Dispensary, where there were premises ready for the reception of its medical officers and of its patients, on any day or hour not already occupied, and for whose patients baths were already established, and a regular contract in existence. Dr Duncan junior, and Dr Duffin, are, or were, both Officers of the Royal Public Dispensary. Can they prescribe better for the Diseases of the Skin in the Lawnmarket than in the premises of the Royal Public Dispensary? Or, if there is anything defective in the management of that Institution, why is it not pointed out by those very gentlemen, and an enquiry made? But why are the public to be called upon for annual subscriptions to provide new Premises, a new Bathing-Establishment, a new Apothecary for every organ in the human body? First they are called upon for subscriptions for a Dispensary in the Old Town, and a Dispensary in the New Town, generally for all diseases; then for a Dispensary for the Eyes, then for Ears, and now for the Skin, in the Old Town; and as the young Doctors multiply, these will of course be all called for again in the New Town; and if these answer their purpose, there will be calls for Dispensaries for the Nose and for the Toes, for the Hair and perhaps for the Nails, till the matter becomes too ridiculous to command the least attention: But if this scheme had been united, in the manner above suggested, with an Establishment already in existence, there might have been a fair claim upon the public for some little additional support, if wanted. I will venture to predict, that there is nothing in this scheme of such value as to justify a new subscription, but the Baths; and these the Managers of the Royal Public Dispensary had at their com-

mand already, and might have upon a larger scale whenever they think proper to give sufficient encouragement to them. Most of those diseases of the skin, for which baths are not the proper remedy, every medical man, that understands his profession, knows how to treat; and the diseases of the skin that are not essentially connected with internal disease, may be reduced to a much more simple classification than that of Dr Willan; they are also found to yield to more simple remedies than those which he has proposed. In these days of "learned and technical affectation," as they have been truly called by the greatest authority, the acquisition of Dr Willan's System may be considered "highly ornamental;" but the late Dr Gregory always declared from his chair, that it was a great deal too learned for him to pretend to understand or to teach. Dr Willan has indeed 35 genera and 150 species, as Dr Duffin says; but his genera are *species*, otherwise he has no disease; for "it is the species alone that constitutes the disease," and so his species are varieties; all of which is clearly proved by Dr Mason Good in his Nosology.

From what Dr Duffin stated to me, and which, I presume, has since been publicly stated to his subscribers, I consider his Apothecary's bill perfectly enormous. It has been proved by Dr Galés in Paris, by Dr De Carro in Vienna, by Mr Rapou in Lyons, and by Assalini in Naples, that the greater part of the diseases of the skin yield to the Vapour Bath without any internal medicine, or at most with that of the simplest and cheapest kind, as salts, sulphur, &c. and upon this very ground the vapour practice was recommended by the venerable Pinel, by Dupuytren, and the most eminent medical men in France, to the notice of the French government. There are few Physicians that will not admit the vapour bath and diet to be the most effectual alteratives. I have already, in my Appendix, quoted the following passage from Mr Wallis, a Surgeon of well-known eminence in Dublin.



“ It is principally in chronic rheumatism and gout, in chronic diseases of the skin, and in various pseudo-syphilitic affections, that these fumigations have been as yet used on the Continent, with decided advantage ; and it is known to every practitioner, that, of all the chronic diseases to which we are subject, there are none, perhaps, on which the remedies previously in use have often a less beneficial effect. How much then are the powers of the Physician increased by the accession of this new instrument of relief, and how zealous should he be in hastening to apply it to the benefit of suffering humanity !

“ From a very extensive experience, I can strongly recommend the employment of sulphureous fumigations in a very large proportion of chronic cutaneous diseases : for example, in almost all cases of Prurigo, of Lepra, of Icthiosis, Pityriasis, Morbus Pediculosus, in several forms of Porrigo or Tinea ; in all cases of Scabies ; in many examples of Sycosis, Lupus, and Ephelis ; and, in conjunction with other remedies, in Pompholyx, Impetigo, Ecthyma, and Rupia.” Again:—

“ I can also say that, in innumerable cases of chronic diseases of the articulations, the consequence of gout and rheumatism ; in such chronic diseases of the osseous, fibrous, and synovial systems, as are the sequelæ of syphilis and the indiscreet use of mercury ; in almost all chronic diseases of the joints, from whatever cause arising ; in some cases of local palsy ; and in some very chronic tumours and glandular diseases, sulphureous fumigation, either partial or general, will be found a most valuable remedy.”

Now, gentlemen, I beg leave to propose to you as Managers of the Royal Public Dispensary, to confer with your medical officers, and get them to make a trial, under the contract you have with me, of this remedy in those diseases thus attested by Mr Wallace, without the employment of any other remedy, or with such as are within the reach of the patients themselves, such as salts, sulphur, or even sea-

water, and the different mineral waters with which this town abounds, mixed or unmixed, as may be indicated. If the consequence shall not be a much greater saving in your Apothecary's bill than all the expense of the baths, and if the cures shall not be more speedily made, you may break your contract with me as soon as you please ; but until you shall have given a fair trial of this proposal, recommended as it is not only by the cases I have published, but by the testimony of the most eminent medical men in all parts of the world, the public will have a right to complain that you have not done your duty by them, and I will certainly take care that the public shall not lose sight of this suggestion ; because if there is any thing in it, as I am perfectly certain there is, the calls upon the bounty of the public may be diminished instead of being increased, and this I presume the public will not be very backward to understand.

I mean no reflection whatever upon your medical officers, with many of whom I am intimately acquainted ; but they are not in the habit of prescribing Baths for the diseases above mentioned ; and unless the responsibility is in some measure taken off them by your desiring such a trial to be made, it is not very likely that they should listen to this proposal, much less can I expect that your Apothecary should be its warmest advocate. I have no desire to interfere with their medical practice ; but unless the cheapest and simplest medicines are ordered, and such are commonly within the patient's own reach, it will not be making a fair experiment of this proposal.

Before I dismiss this letter, I beg to say a word or two upon the subject of *monopoly*, which was very pointedly alluded to by more than one of Dr Duffin's friends at the meeting.

I remember a Physician, who had been a long time in Persia, coming to my Vapour Bath, and telling me that he was never more agreeably surprised than upon hearing, on his return, that there were Vapour Baths in Edinburgh ;

and he paid me the compliment to say, that he verily believed if it had not been for me, there would not have been any such thing in Edinburgh for fifty years to come.

When I first formed this Establishment in Edinburgh, the Sulphur Fumigation was quite unknown, nor was the use of even the simple Vapour Bath employed as a remedy in disease in Scotland. I might, therefore, with perfect propriety, have taken out a patent for the introduction of these remedies, and have reaped all the advantages of it, without its having been considered as a monopoly, as the law allows to every patentee the exclusive right of any new invention for fourteen years, whether the same has been discovered "*by study or by travel*;" but I did no such thing.

I am old enough to remember when the late Mr Watt, to whom statues are now to be erected, and with whom I had the pleasure of being intimately acquainted, was on the point of being ruined, in consequence of the late Judge Buller's misleading the Court of Common Pleas by his talents and authority to consider Mr Watt in the odious light of a monopolist; and I had the pleasure in the next great patent cause that was tried, to hear the law, as laid down by Judge Buller, receive its death-blow from the present Chancellor, then Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. My old friend, the Rev. Edmund Cartwright, one of the most classic poets of the age, and the author of administering yest in putrid fever, had invented a very ingenious machine for combing wool, by which an immense saving of labour was made, and for which he took out a patent. Notwithstanding this, his invention was pirated, and produced nothing but ruin to its author. His brother, Major Cartwright, supported the expense of an action, that did not cost less than between two and three thousand pounds to vindicate the rights of the patentee, and did me the honour to employ me as Counsel. Upon that occasion, Lord Eldon, who tried the cause, among many other sound principles in patent law, laid it down from the Bench,

that to consider the rights of a patentee in the odious light of a monopoly, was an abuse of language; that the exclusive right given by the law to the discoverer or introducee of a useful invention, was the reward which the public gave for the knowledge thus imparted to them, and which, but for the patentee, they might not have had: That he ought not therefore to be considered in the odious light of a monopolist, but as a person who had conferred a benefit on the public; and that in all questions respecting his patent, the bargain he had made with the public ought to be construed upon the principles of good faith, and not with that strictness with which monopolies are construed.

This was the language of a moralist, as well as of the greatest lawyer that England has produced since my Lord Coke; and it not only established the patent of the Rev. Edmund Cartwright, but it was the means of procuring an extension of it by Parliament for another fourteen years; and this not being considered a sufficient remuneration, Parliament actually gave him the sum of £10,000: So that, next to his brother the honest Major, he might well say of Lord Eldon,

*“ Ille meas errare boves, ut cernis, et ipsum ”*

*“ Ludere, quæ vellem, calamo permisit agresti.”*

But I have never pretended to have any exclusive right to the practice I introduced in this place; nor shall I ever think of opposing any thing that the public are disposed to do for the good of the poor; but I felt called upon, and indeed many of my best friends considered it to be my duty to put you and the public in possession of all the facts and circumstances above stated; and having done so, I leave the matter with perfect confidence to their impartial judgment; but I trust, after what I have said, that no person can with justice represent me in the odious light of a monopolist. I have the honour to be,

GENTLEMEN,

Very faithfully, your Servant,

WILLIAM SCOTT.